



## Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Record of an Authority decision delegated to an Officer as required under Regulation 7 of the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulation 2014

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| Subject of decision      | <p>The Area Commander of Prevention is authorised to procure a replacement Water Carrier to Whale Tankers Ltd, without inviting competitive tenders, pursuant to paragraph 3.1.(c) of the Authorities Contract Standing Orders.</p> <p>The contract will be awarded as a Direct Award under RM6244 Purchase of Standard and Specialist Vehicles; Lot 6 Refuse Collection and other Waste Management Vehicles.</p> <p>The Contract is anticipated to commence on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026.</p> <p>The initial period of the contract shall be 15 years, unless otherwise terminated in accordance with the Contract Terms and Conditions.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Officer name             | Jon Butlin                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Job title                | Area Commander- Prevention                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Date decision taken      | 20/03/2026                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Reasons for the decision | <p>A fire service water carrier is a specialised vehicle designed to transport large volumes of water or foam—typically to incident sites with limited or no hydrant access. These vehicles are crucial in rural areas or large fires, often supporting multiple fire engines, feeding them water via on-board pumps.</p> <p>The Authority's water carrier capability has been reduced from three to two vehicles after a recent incident rendered one unit (Peterchurch) non-roadworthy. This significantly compromises the Service's resilience, particularly during high-demand or rural incidents. The other two carriers are located at Leominster and Evesham.</p> <p>Given the rural nature of Herefordshire, carrier availability is essential to maintaining operational resilience.</p> <p>Therefore, the Authority has an urgent requirement to replace the defective water carrier. As outlined in the Fleet Plan 2026–2030, one water carrier was already scheduled for replacement; however, due to the recent incident, this replacement has been brought forward to 2026/27 financial year to maintain operational resilience. The additional two water carrier remains scheduled for replacement in 2028–29 and 2030+, in line with the Fleet Plan.</p> <p>These justifications are also underpinned by the Authorities strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Community Risk Management Plan 2025-30</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Asset Management Strategy 2021-25</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Fleet Plan 2026-30</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ As set out in the CRMP 2025-30 plan the aim is to prevent fire, road traffic collisions and other</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

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|                     | <p>emergencies from happening in the first place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Fleet Plan which forms part of the overarching Asset Management Strategy the Authority aims to maintain a high standard of fleet provision through continual improvement, evaluation and investment.</li> </ul> <p>Whale Tankers Ltd is a competent and suitably qualified manufacturer, operating since 1969, with proven experience in supporting the Emergency Services sector.</p> <p>The Authority's latest water carrier was supplied by Whale Tankers Ltd and has consistently met performance expectations, demonstrating reliability and high build quality.</p> <p>Given Whale Tankers Ltd previous involvement in the design and build of the Authority's existing carrier, the Authority is confident that a replacement vehicle supplied by them will continue to meet the stringent safety standards, operational requirements, and structural integrity expected of this type of specialist appliance.</p> <p>Following a comprehensive market research exercise, alternative suppliers and their respective offerings have been carefully evaluated and subsequently discounted. This decision is based on a combination of factors, including extended chassis lead times, constrained availability of build slots, and overall cost positions that are significantly higher than those proposed by Whale Tankers Ltd. In comparison, Whale's offering demonstrates a more competitive commercial profile, supported by shorter lead times and greater production availability, thereby representing the most viable and cost-effective solution aligned with current project requirements.</p> <p>Other factors that have contributed to making this informed decision can be summarised as: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining consistency in the water carrier fleet provision by not having different technical characteristics</li> <li>• Delivering the Authorities outcomes for carbon reduction/environmental projects by appointing locally</li> <li>• Support SMEs/local economy; By having regard that many SMEs can often face the lack of resources and expertise required to navigate the public sectors procurement process, which can be complex and time consuming, which can be a disadvantage when competing against larger firms.</li> <li>• Pre-procurement assessment completed to ensure location, quality and capabilities in providing the goods</li> <li>• Social Value; there is an obligation to consider social value applies to new contracts (inclusive of direct awards)</li> <li>• Stakeholders have been part of the review and decision making.</li> </ul> |
| Details of decision | In order to directly purchase from Whale Tankers Ltd the Authority need to ensure we are compliant with the award guidance set out in                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

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|                                                                 | <p>the framework RM6244 as well as our own internal contractual standing orders; the steps detailed below are the award steps and not the due diligence in ensuring this route to market is the best outcome for the Fire Authority.</p> <p>In line with our contract standing order the following steps have been satisfied: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a full specification before entering a procurement process;</li> <li>• The route to market is the best outcome for the Authority <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced timescale by not having to run a procurement process</li> <li>• Delivery time; delivery required prior August 2026</li> <li>• Technical Merit; Service fitness for purpose; due to previous experience. Professionalism</li> <li>• Costs over the duration of the contract period are lower than other suppliers and are within the allocated budget</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The terms and conditions are appropriate.</li> </ul> <p>Guidance for using a direct award under the framework is as follows “Direct award is usually the best route to market for urgent and less complex requirements”.</p> <p>The procedure adopted (direct award) is considered to be proportionate to the nature, complexity and cost of the contract.</p> <p>Of the <a href="#">9 suppliers</a> listed under Lot 6: Whale Tankers Ltd is the only supplier to be contacted for their pricing and technical information based on the reasons set out in this officer’s decision notice.</p> <p>The quote from Whale Tankers Ltd was obtained using the Authority’s Specification</p> <p>The vehicle will be purchased in financial year 2026/27 (Capital) with a contract value £223,092</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2000 gallon (Nominal) Non Haz Vacuum Tanker with Jetting</li> <li>• DAF XD 340 4x2 Day Cab 18t GVW Full Air Suspension</li> <li>• The DAF cab has been selected due to cost and timescales</li> </ul> <p>The vehicle will have an estimated lead time of 18 weeks from the date of order</p> |
| Details of alternative options considered and rejected (if any) | <p>To run an open tender process /or further competition via the Emergency Response Vehicles Framework DS339-20 Lot 5 Special Vehicles for a Contractor to provide a water carrier has been discounted due to its unlikelihood that alternative providers would provide the goods in time and for less than the amount we are able to validate, there is no guarantee that the costs would remain as-is due to the time to run a process and the nature of the market, its vulnerability and rising costs.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

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|                                                       | <p>By direct awarding under CCS RM6244 and waiving the Contract Standing Orders for this contract would allow the urgent work to progress; reduced disruption to operations whilst a maintain service delivery and expected levels of expenditure.</p> <p>This strategy allows us to preserve the seamless integration with our existing fleet implemented throughout the service, ensuring complete harmony in its entirety, due to Whale Tankers Ltd having already worked with the Authority previously. Furthermore, this approach significantly mitigates expenses when compared to the alternative frameworks which would involve considerably higher costs and urgent timescales delayed.</p> |
| Any interests declared by a Member or Officer         | N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Links to relevant background documents or information | Water Carrier Specification                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |



Signed

Date 25<sup>th</sup> March 2026

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